

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY JUSTICE INITIATIVE GUIDE



A brain injury cannot be seen from the outside, it is experienced from within.

BACKGROUND :

Disability Rights of North Carolina is looking to establish a Traumatic Brain Injury screening and supportive pilot program within an area of the North Carolina Criminal Justice System. The purpose of this project is to address the current gap in screening for TBI and available supportive assistance to justice-involved individuals.

A TBI can have long-lasting and profound effects on a person's health and well-being including cognitive and psychological consequences resulting in impaired memory-processing speed, emotion dysregulation, and executive dysfunction. All of these conditions can have a devastating impact on daily functioning and impacts on security for the surrounding incarceration community.

PROJECT MANAGER

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MISSION

To build an innovative program that addresses safety, education, training, service needs, and accommodations for individuals with a TBI in the criminal justice system.



VISION

The DRNC aims to improve the safety of courts and facilities for individuals affected by TBI, staff members, and the community upon their reentry.

GOALS

- To implement a multi-step pilot program to identify and offer accommodations for individuals with TBI in the criminal justice system.
- This program will include TBI screening coupled with educational materials for the individuals and their families, complemented with staff training and the development of community re-entry resources.

DATA :

Every year, about 1.7 million people sustain a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) in the United States, and TBIs are a contributing factor in almost one-third (30.5%) of injury-related deaths. (Faul, etc. 2010)

North Carolina's TBI population data is limited. Based on the CDC's report that about 2% of the US population is living with a TBI, it is estimated that approximately 208,000 people in NC have sustained a TBI. (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, 2022)

Racial and ethnic minorities and Individuals in correctional and detention facilities are at greater risk of a TBI and are more likely to experience long-term health problems or die due to having a TBI. (E. Durand, 2017) North Carolina is among the states that do not screen upon admission to prisons or jails for TBIs. It is estimated that up to 60% of incarcerated individuals are living with TBIs. (Harniss, Klemme, Johnson, & Shulein, 2022) The CDC warned over 15 years ago that, many people in prisons and jails are living with TBI-related problems, complicating their management and treatment while they are incarcerated. (Traumatic brain injury screening: An introduction, 2006)



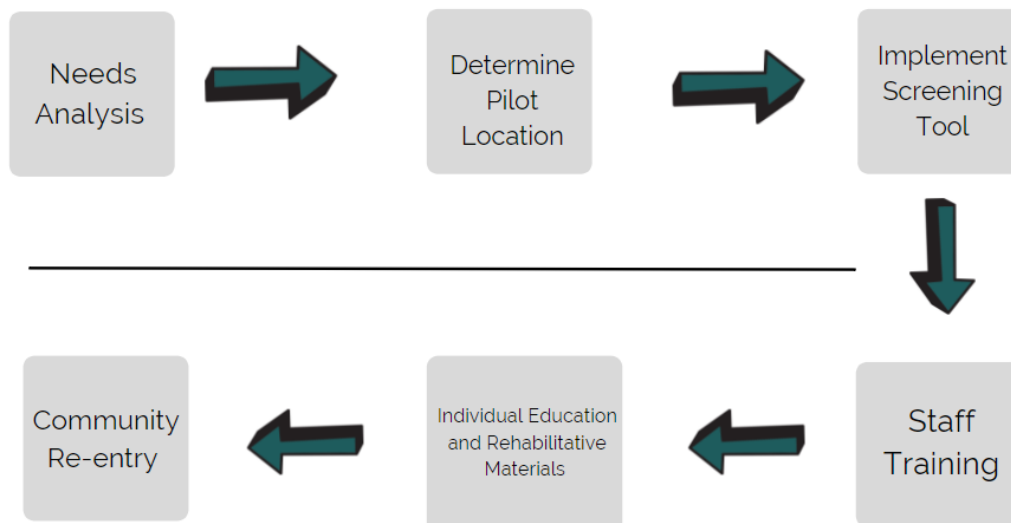
DATA CONTINUED:

The Brain Injury Association of America currently states in research on its website that:

"Individuals with TBI may experience disabilities that make prison life challenging and make the transition from the correction setting to the community setting more difficult. Additionally, staff in prisons and community corrections often lack understanding of TBI and may unknowingly respond in ways that worsen TBI symptoms. This may reduce the ability of incarcerated individuals to conform to prison expectations and may limit their ability to benefit from programs and interventions." (Harniss, Klemme, Johnson, & Shulein, 2022)

A screening tool is necessary to identify incarcerated individuals with a TBI. Identifying individuals with a TBI would allow for the coordination of services and accommodations needed for individuals to remain safe in prison. TBI symptoms will also pose challenges when they return to the community, the screening will help identify community services needed to provide the best chance for a successful community transition. Education and training for the department of public safety staff are needed as well as screening and accommodation. Staff working with these individuals must be trained and develop skills necessary to appropriately interact with people with TBIs and avoid worsening incarcerated individuals' TBI symptoms and keep everyone safe.

Current Project Process



References

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